

TWIN CITY LINES

Winter 2017


PARK POINT
AFTER THE BIG STORM
PHOTO © 1922
BY MALCOLM EDSON

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The Minnesota Streetcar Museum operates the Como-Harriet Streetcar Line in Minneapolis and the Excelsior Streetcar Line in Excelsior. Its mission is to preserve Minnesota's electric railway heritage.

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Stocking stuffer issue

Readers have probably noticed that most issues of TCL are devoted to one or two big articles. I really like to get into these subjects in depth. This issue, however, contains a bunch of odds and ends, smaller articles and single items that are just interesting. It may look a little jumbled. So even though the holidays are past, here are some stocking stuffers for your enjoyment.

Corrections and new info

The article in the last issue on the Selby Hill counterweight was uncertain why streetcars climbed and descended the hill on the "wrong" track. Not surprisingly, Russ Olson has supplied the answer. The text incorrectly said that the counterweight car on the westbound track would push a streetcar up the hill, then drop down the hill to wait for another. The eastbound car would ease a streetcar down the hill, then climb it to wait for another. Russ says the counterweight cars could only travel down the hill in the company of a streetcar. That's because the counterweight itself weighed the same as the counterweight car plus a streetcar. The counterweight car was too light to do it alone. So the counterweight car stayed a the top or bottom of the hill until the next streetcar came along. Therefore, when a streetcar approached the counterweight, it used whichever track the counterweight car happened to be occupying.

* * *

Thanks to John Nordale for identifying the location of the photo on Page 23. It's 54th Avenue E. and Superior Street on the Lester Park line.

The Feb. 1922 snow storm

-Aaron Isaacs

The single worst blizzard to hit Duluth-Superior began on February 21, 1922. The Duluth Street Railway files contain detailed recaps of the storm and its aftermath.

Occurring relatively late in the year, DSR's rolling stock was reeling from previous storms. In a Feb. 21 memo to general manager Herbert Warren, master mechanic R. J. Crawford noted, "On February 1st during the heavy snow storm, two armatures were burned out in #1 snow plow and all four in #3 plow and during the Sunday (Feb. 19) snow storm the other two burned out in #1 plow, making eight armatures we lost this winter so far.

From what I can learn from the operating department they are short one plow for the Duluth division and one for the Superior division and I, myself, think we should provide one for Park Point. I would suggest that we build one or two or place an order with the Transit Supply Company for them next winter. These plows could be built for single end operation except the Park Point plow, which would have to be a double ender.

We are going to have trouble with the water on the tracks this spring when the snow begins to melt, and I suggest that the track drips on all lines be kept open so as to take care of the water. I have planned to hang a board back of the rear right hand wheel of the rear truck so as to keep the wheel from throwing the water on the steps and gate rods. I had them on a year or two ago and they worked out very well as they kept the gate levers free from ice."

Feb. 27 post-storm report from Crawford to Warren

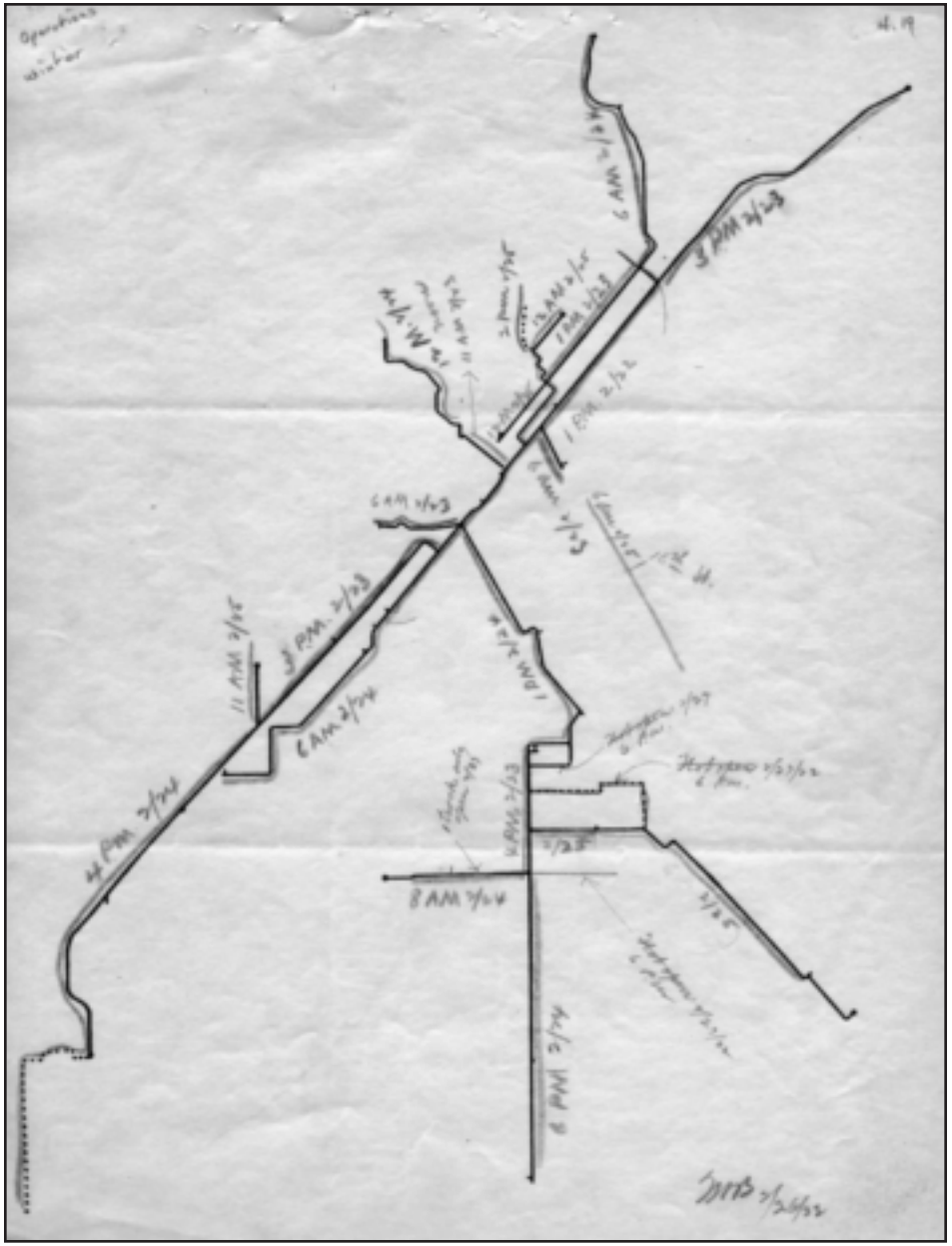
"Snow began falling on the morning of Feb. 21st but did not become serious until night. During the night of Feb. 21st a high wind came up with continued snow and by 6 AM Feb. 22nd not a passenger car was running in either Duluth or Superior. The first service established after the tie-up was at 1 PM February 22nd between 26th Avenue W. and Superior Street and 24th Avenue E. and Superior Street. This was the only piece of track in operation on February 22nd. Not a passenger car was run on Feb. 22nd in Superior and the first car was put in operation about 4 PM Feb. 23rd between 3rd Street and 21st Street on Tower Avenue. The lines in Duluth were gradually opened up until by noon, Feb. 25th all lines were in operation with the exception of Park Point."

"We had 16 sets of armature coils burned out. The snow plows and flat cars were in and out of the shops continuously. Our four snow plows will have to be run 16 hours a day during the coming week in order to work back the snow from the rails and to cut down the ice between the rails. The Broadway line, the Allouez extension, the new extension on 21st Street, one track on the Billings Park line from Tower Avenue to Wyoming Avenue and the 6th Street loop track are not yet open although Mr. Williams says he expects to have these lines open by tomorrow Feb. 28th."

The newspapers reported on the storm and DSR's progress restoring service.

Front cover: One of the worst snow storms ever hit Duluth on Feb. 22, 1922. This streetcar was parked in the carhouse yard overnight.
Inside front cover: It took three days to reopen the Park Point line, seen here near the Aerial Bridge.





Left: Despite being on a peninsula exposed to the full fury of the storm, the Park Point line had the least capable plow in the system, converted from an old single truck streetcar. The drawbar means it was pushed by another streetcar. Snow has worked its way inside the car body.
Above: This hand-marked map from the DSR after-storm staff report shows when each line was cleared.

2/22/22 Duluth Herald

"When the street railway was doing its best to keep the lines open during the early hours this morning, the huge plow suddenly came upon a small auto stalled in the drift at 13th Ave. West, and the man in the auto was sound asleep. After considerable effort on the part of the plow crew, the car was put in motion and shoved out of the way. The hardened snow in the street from former storms, the rails being in a trough, and the fact that there is no place for the snow to be placed, causing it to drift back into the tracks, is one of the reasons why it is so difficult to obtain satisfactory work from the snowplow, according to street railway officials.

"Where are the snowplows?" The question was answered at 11 o'clock this morning by the statement that one was completely buried in the snow drift just beyond the interstate bridge on Connor's Point, another lost somewhere near Morgan Park and the third short-circuited by snow and temporarily out of commission. The company is attempting to haul it to the car barn so as to give it the necessary repair."

2/23 Duluth News Tribune

"Street car service was at a complete standstill yesterday, with the exception of service from the East End to the West End. During the morning, few cars were in operation on those lines. In the afternoon and evening, a 10-minute schedule was maintained, the company reported, to connect the West and East Ends. Four street cars stranded in West Duluth and New Duluth since early yesterday morning were finally dug out and brought to the car barn. There was still one street car snowed under in New Duluth late last night. There was no street car service on the Lakeside, Woodland, E. 4th, E. 9th or Kenwood lines. Snow plows were at work on every line in the hope that normal service might be resumed at an early hour this morning. A snow plow was sent to dig out another plow on Connor's Point. It would be necessary to send men out to find the street cars on Park Point, as they are believed to be entirely covered."

2/25/22 Duluth News Tribune

"Normal streetcar service on all lines with the exception of Park Point and W. 4th Street routes will be resumed today. Service on Park Point line probably will be resumed Sunday or Monday. 75 men are now engaged in clearing the snow from the tracks on Park Point."

Lines opened

2/22 1 PM Superior Street, 26th Avenue W. to 24th Avenue E.
2/23 6 AM Piedmont line, Aerial Bridge line
2/23 11 AM Incline
2/23 1 PM East 4th Street (Duluth) line.
2/23 3 PM Lester Park line, Grand Avenue to 57th Avenue W.
2/23 4 PM Tower Avenue, 3rd Street to 21st Street
2/24 6 AM Woodland line, West Duluth line
2/24 8 AM Billings Park line (1 track)
2/24 Noon Highland line
2/24 1 PM Interstate line
2/24 4 PM Morgan Park-New Duluth line
2/24 6 PM South Superior line
2/25 6 AM Park Point line
2/25 11 AM 57th Avenue W. line
2/25 Noon West 4th Street line, East 8th Street line
2/25 East End line (Superior)
2/25 2 PM Kenwood line
2/27 6 PM East 21st Street line, Broadway line, 6th Street loop (Superior)
2/27 Billings Park second track, Allouez extension



Above: The isolated Highland line had no snowplows, only plows mounted on its two streetcars.
Below: This is the end of the New Duluth line. New Duluth and Highland were both closed to two and a half days.



March 1, 1922 Duluth News Tribune

"If old man winter had made off with 5 of our best cars instead of dealing us this storm the result would not have been worse financially, W. S. Byers of the DSR company. Said yesterday. He estimated that with lost fares amounting to $10,000, snow shoveling at $4000, snowplow operation at $3000, lost time paid carmen, cost of repairing damages to equipment and other items at $8000 that the direct cost of the storm to the company to February 26, could conservatively be set at $25,000. It may run anywhere from $30,000-$40,000 before we get back to normal."

In his summary report, Crawford noted that 111 men were employed as snow shovelers for the six day period ending Feb. 26th. All four plows ran 24 hours a day for five and a half days. To put the cost in perspective, in 2016 dollars, $40,000 would be $547,000.

More Duluth trolley bus photos

Some years ago the Museum acquired a large number of photos of Duluth trolley buses. There wasn't enough space in the last issue to print more than a few, and we probably won't be revisiting the subject for some time, so here is a selection. Most are from the mid-1950s, shortly before the wires came down.







Top left: A westbound Grand Avenue bus turns from 21st Ave. W. onto 3rd St. This is one of the two 1944 Pullmans.

Top right and right: 1936 Brills lay over on Grand Avenue at 63rd Ave. W., the end of the line. The harps holding the shoes at the end of the trolley poles could swivel, making it possible to curb the bus away from the overhead wires.







Left: The Lester Park loop in the 1930s (bottom) and the 1950s (top). Note the waiting station. It dates from the streetcar era and is still standing today.

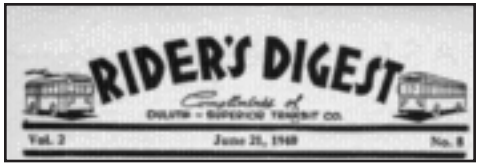
Above: Bus #1, a 1931 Brill, leaves the loop at Grand Avenue and 45th Avenue W.







Above left: Laying over at 63rd and Grand.
Left: One of the 1934 Brills, location unknown.
Above: Viewed from the short turn loop, a Woodland-bound bus turns from Superior Street onto 24th Avenue E. The Lester Park line continues to the right. There was a lot of metal in the air at junctions.

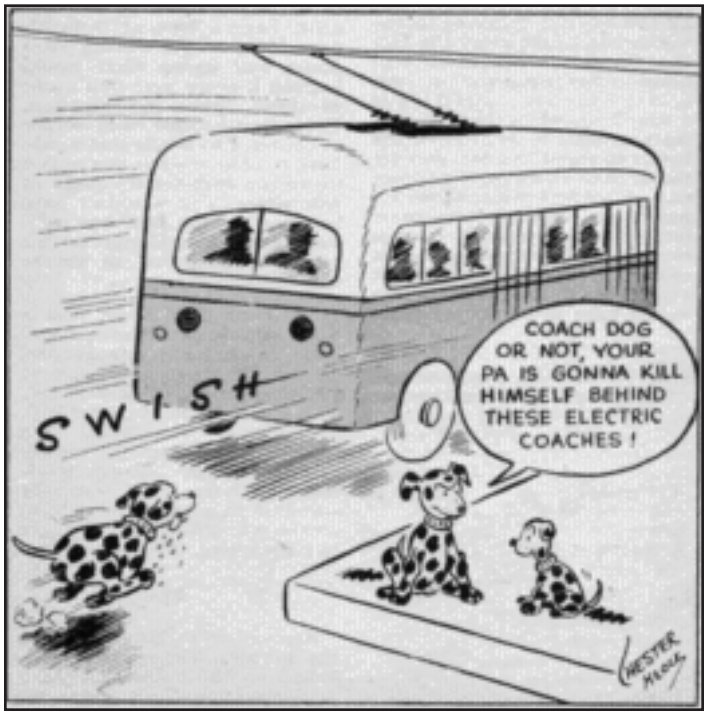


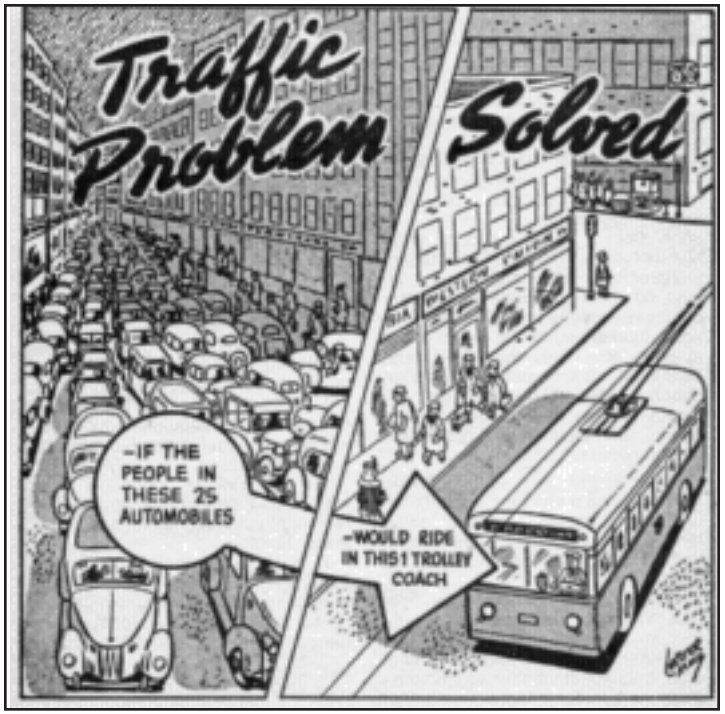
Rider's Digest artwork

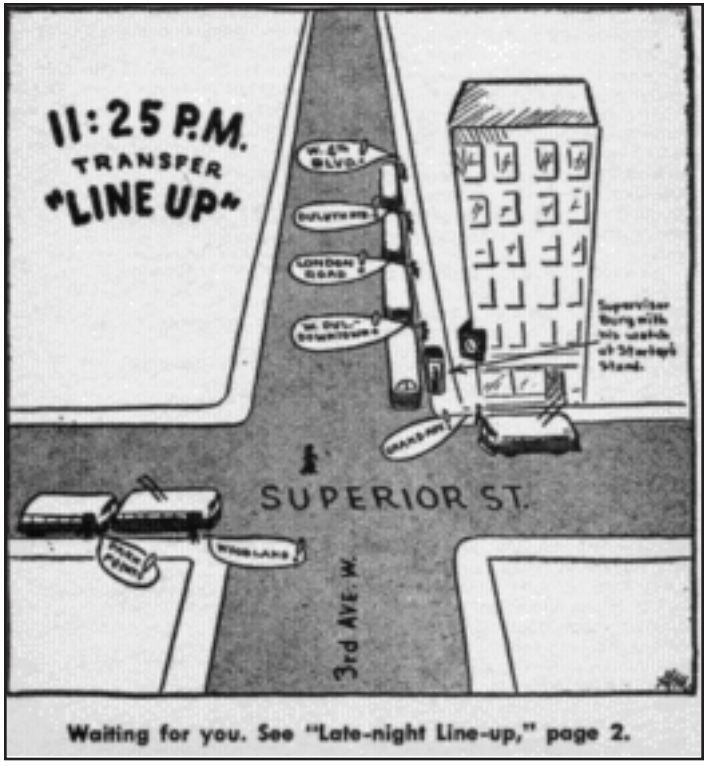
Starting around the end of streetcar service in 1939, Duluth-Superior Transit began publishing a little pocket sized newsletter for its customers called Rider's Digest. It contained news items and transit promotional messages. DST apparently had an in-house cartoonist, because on the cover of every issue was an original cartoon with clearly Duluth subject matter. Trolley buses appear in a number of them, so here's a selection.











Streetcars vs. fire engines

Editor's note: This item was sent in by an MSM member, whose name I have misplaced. My apologies. If you recognize it, let me know and it will be noted in the next issue.

Re-reading "Mill City Firefighters," a 1981 history written by Richard Prosser, I note that three MFD firefighters died as a result of collisions with streetcars:

William Traeger, Captain, Ladder 9 9/3/1912. Traeger died in a collision of Ladder 9 with a streetcar on Central Ave between 5th and 6th Streets SE, while making a run to 7th Ave SE and 9th St. The rig's wheels caught in the streetcar tracks as it came up behind the streetcar; the driver managed to get the front wheels clear of the tracks but the truck slammed sideways into the streetcar. Traeger was thrown to the ground and run over by the truck's rear wheels. (Note: Ladder 9 was a horse drawn rig in 1909.)

James Brady Jr., Firefighter, Auxiliary 1 12/31/1927. Brady died in a collision between the Aux Squad (Note: this was the rescue squad) and a streetcar at Nicollet Ave and 11th St. The squad, responding to a false alarm at 1610 Stevens Ave, struck the streetcar at high speed when the streetcar pulled across Nicollet in front of it. Brady was thrown from the rig and died instantly.

Albert Thuleen, Firefighter, Ladder 5 4/17/1930. Thuleen died in a collision between Ladder 5 and a streetcar at Hennepin Ave and 31st St. Ladder 5, northbound on Hennepin on a fire run, swung out to pass the streetcar when its tiller broke. The ladder trailer slammed sideways into the rear of the streetcar, throwing Thuleen to the street with fatal results. (Ladder 5 was housed at Station 23, the building still there on Hennepin north of 36th.)



Above: In 1948 a Bryant-Johnson streetcar upended a fire truck at 44th and Bryant.
Below: The Duluth carbarn complex, drawn for a DSR publicity piece.





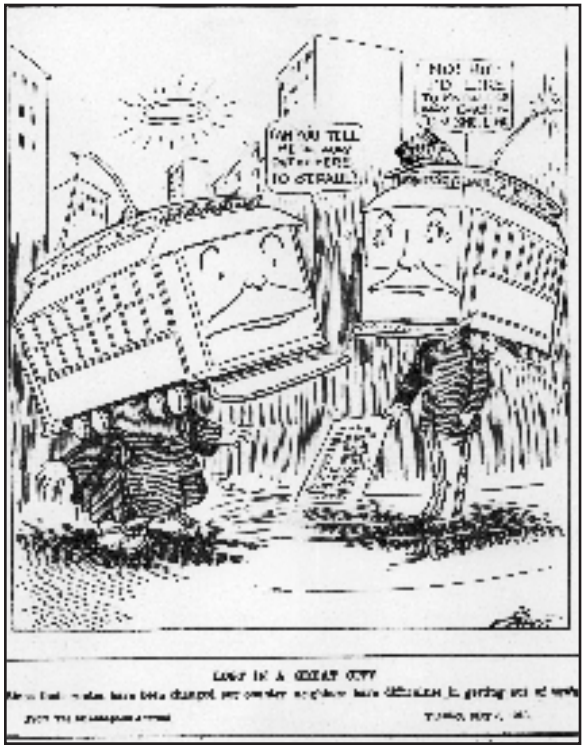
Streetcars in political cartoons

Charles Bartholomew was the Minneapolis Journal's political cartoonist from 1890 to 1915. In 1933 he donated his collection of over 6000 cartoons to the Minneapolis Public Library. They're in the Special Collections at the Minneapolis Downtown Library, now part of the Hennepin County Library system.

Streetcars played a big role in the day to day life of the city, so it's no surprise that they appeared from time to time in Bartholomew's cartoons. Frequently he humorously skewered TCRT for overcrowded streetcars and slow service. Some cartoons covered labor relations. After 1910 there are several that point out the confusion that resulted when car stops were selectively moved from the far side of intersections to the near side.

Here is a selection. and more appear in the following straphanger ordinance story. All are from the Special Collections at the Downtown Minneapolis Library.







Above: The Selby-Lake line was slow in 1910, and it's still slow today. Apparently that was also the Interurban's problem (Above right).

Left: In 1910 TCRT changed quite a few routings within downtown, hence this cartoon.

Right: This was probably inspired by the so-called "streetcar boats" on Lake Minnetonka.







Top right: This seems to have something to do with state regulation of railroads, but what?

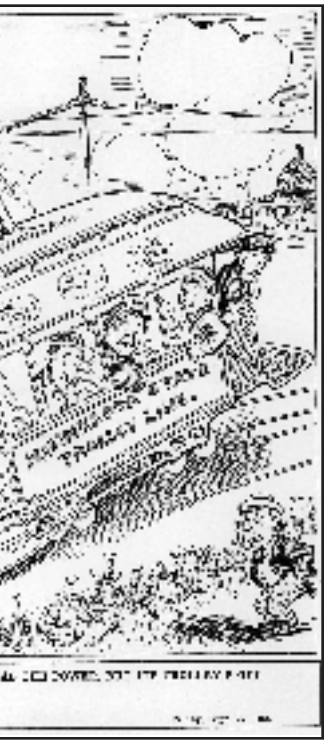




Lower left, second column and bottom center:
Just missing one's streetcar was a universal theme.







Top right: Traditionally police officers in uniform had ridden for free. A new state law called the Anti-pass Law required them to pay, hence the conductor's challenge.

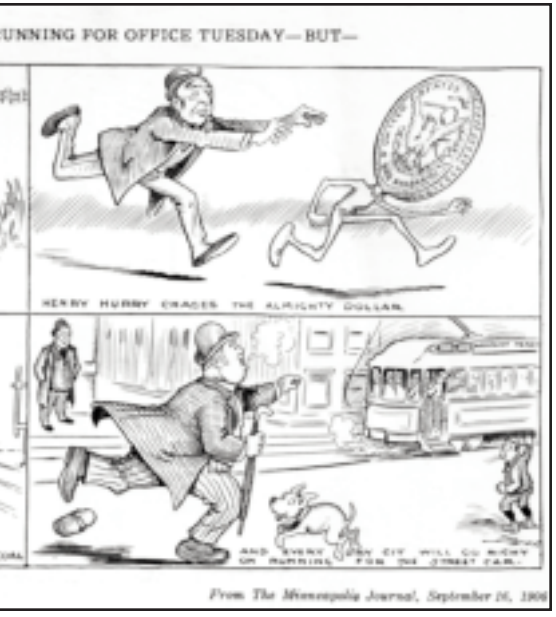
Bottom right: Planning of new lines couldn't please everyone.



Before he died in 1909, Thomas Lowry made an appearance or two.

Top right: Maybe Lowry was trying to bring the Republican Convention to Minneapolis, where it had last been in 1892. In 1908 it was held in Chicago.





From The Minneapolis Journal, September 16, 1908





The Straphanger ordinance

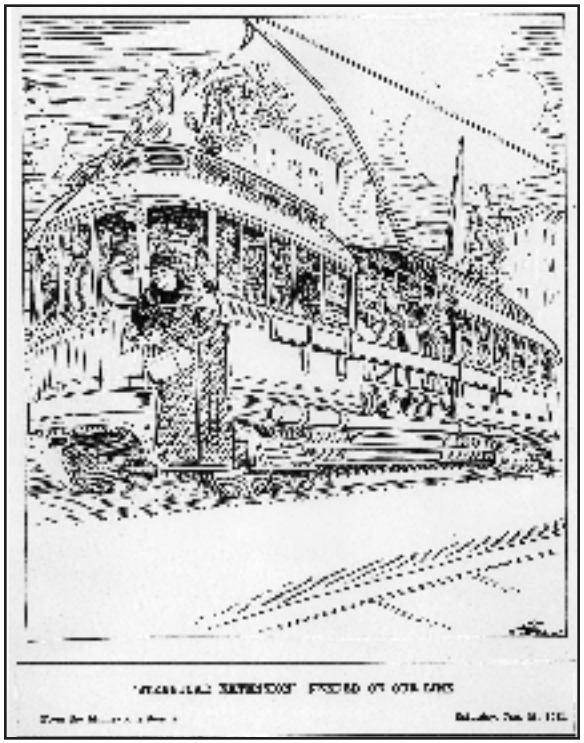
-Aaron Isaacs

From 1900 to 1910 the population of Minneapolis grew 48 percent, but streetcar ridership increased 180 percent. TCRT built 665 streetcars during that period, but couldn't keep up. Not surprisingly, there was plenty of overcrowding and the public wasn't happy about it. Dissatisfied with the service, citizens looked to the city council to force TCRT to do better.

Some suggested franchising another competing streetcar company, but that idea never took off. Instead, the council passed what became known as the Straphanger Ordinance.

Each streetcar seated about 50 passengers, but TCRT routinely packed in up to 125. Of course, any car that was so overloaded couldn't stay on schedule. It would get later and later, and soon its follower would catch up and maybe the follower's follower as well. As long as there have been streetcars and buses, passengers will almost always pile onto the first one to come along, even if others are a block or two behind. Thus the first is jammed to the doors while the followers usually have plenty of seats.

If only the overloading of the first car could be prevented, the loads would even out and the line would be much more likely to stay on schedule. That was the thinking of Minneapolis City Attorney Fish and Council Member John Peterson in 1911, when they authored the Straphanger Ordinance. It made it illegal for TCRT to put more than 72 people (48 seated, 24 standing) on a streetcar, unless there was a following car within 300 feet. Each streetcar had to display a sign saying 72 was the max. Police were authorized to fine TCRT $50 for every passenger over 72 and could arrest the





Left top and bottom: The straphanger ordinance grew out of public frustration with overcrowded streetcars.

Right top: After the ordinance was passed, police enforcement came in for criticism.

Right bottom: Not everyone missed the opportunity to stand in an overcrowded car, especially if it meant getting home sooner.





crew for overloading or not displaying the 72 max sign. Instead, once loaded to 72, the crew was to pass up any other waiting passengers until someone got off.

TCRT strenuously objected and took the matter to court, but the ordinance went into effect on May 4, 1911. To avoid the fines, TCRT put out extra cars, instructing them to run in pairs, because there was no fine if the second car was 300 feet behind or less. Two days later the police chief deployed five officers, who found some illegal overloads and arrested the crew of a Bloomington-Plymouth car. Another pair was arrested a few days later. They were allowed to continue their runs but had to show up in court.

Having unsuccessfully asked the courts to stay the implementation of the ordinance, TCRT gave in on May 13 and issued formal instructions to its crews. The trial of the first arrested crew members began on May 15, with TCRT providing their legal defense. On June 12 the court found the first two crew members guilty and fined them each $5, which TCRT paid. The police chief announced that from now on enforcement would be vigorous.

You may recall that the city assumed there was sufficient streetcar service to avoid overloads, if only the cars ran on time. However, many passengers were being passed up and having to wait up to an hour to board. The city council members contended that TCRT crews were passing up waiting passengers even though their loads were well below 72 and that this was a TCRT tactic to pressure the city into repealing the ordinance.

In the face of considerable criticism from the public, Council Member Peterson first proposed that overloads be permitted, but no fare could be charged for passengers beyond 72. That went nowhere, so he proposed that the city council be able to order TCRT to increase service frequency, so apparently there weren't enough streetcars after all.

Near side stops complicate matters

In the middle of all this, the city council complicated matters by deciding to move car stops from far side (beyond the intersection) to near side—but only on paved streets. The public was slow to catch on, which resulted in large downtown crowds being passed up because they were standing at the old stop location. Not surprisingly, many passengers thought this was happening because of the straphanger ordinance, leading to the claim that crews were in violation because their cars were not full.

A few months later the stop location ordinance was changed again, with nearside stops only in certain parts of downtown and Lake Street, rather than on all paved streets. Naturally confusion reigned, providing fodder for Bartholomew's cartoons at right.

The city council was in turmoil, because the straphanger ordinance hadn't solved the problem. It only resulted in longer waits to board a car. They began to consider repeal of the ordinance and debated mandating higher service levels. That actually happened when they mandated 2-minute service on the Minnehaha line. Of course they did this when the line was down to a single track for sewer construction, and it was physically impossible to push that many cars through the bottleneck. That didn't prevent the council from dragging TCRT officials before it to accuse the company of not obeying the new law.

On July 21 more trainmen were charged with violating the straphanger ordinance. Then the police escalated their enforcement by removing the crew of an overloaded westbound





These two cartoons satirize the confusion over nearside versus farside stops, which the city moved with little public notice.

Interurban at Seven Corners. In no time 19 streetcars were backed up behind the crewless car. It turns out that the car became overloaded in St. Paul, where there was no straphanger ordinance, following a St. Paul Saints baseball game at Lexington Park. Apparently no one had considered that an intercity car would have to shed passengers at the city limits to enter Minneapolis legally.

The judge threw out the overloading charges against the motormen. After all, they were isolated behind a bulkhead on the car's front platform and had nothing to do with how many passengers boarded the car. That was the conductor's job. The conductors were fined, and were required by the court to pay the fines personally, instead of being covered by TCRT.

It should be noted that during this whole controversy there was another one bubbling. The city wanted a series of route extensions that TCRT resisted, feeling they were too far in advance of development and wouldn't attract enough riders. TCRT approached the city with a compromise—they would build some of the extensions if the city

increased the permitted number of standees to 35. The council approved an increase to 36, but for the winter only.

The inflexibility of the ordinance led to unintended consequences. A heavy rainstorm on October 3 interrupted service on several lines. The newspaper account says the straphanger ordinance was enforced, which caused hundreds to wait longer in the rain. A month later on the first cold day, hundreds waited while the ordinance was enforced. On November 4, TCRT provided 70 extra cars after a Gopher football game and loaded them to 100 passengers each, causing the city to allege a violation.

I wish I knew the end of this story. The flurry of newspaper stories ended in 1912, and the historical online Minneapolis Tribunes are unavailable after 1922. The city passed a new streetcar franchise in 1919, and perhaps the straphanger ordinance died with it.

Almost a Road

Not too many MSM members may know that the Como-Harriet right of way from Lake Calhoun through Linden Hills to 44th and France almost became a roadway. A Minneapolis Star newspaper story from December 16, 1952 reports on the plans.

What's going to happen to the streetcar right of way past Calhoun and Harriet to the city limits when the Como-Harriet line is converted to buses?

That's a question rising toward the top of the docket as the Twin City Rapid Transit Company speeds up its plans for conversion.

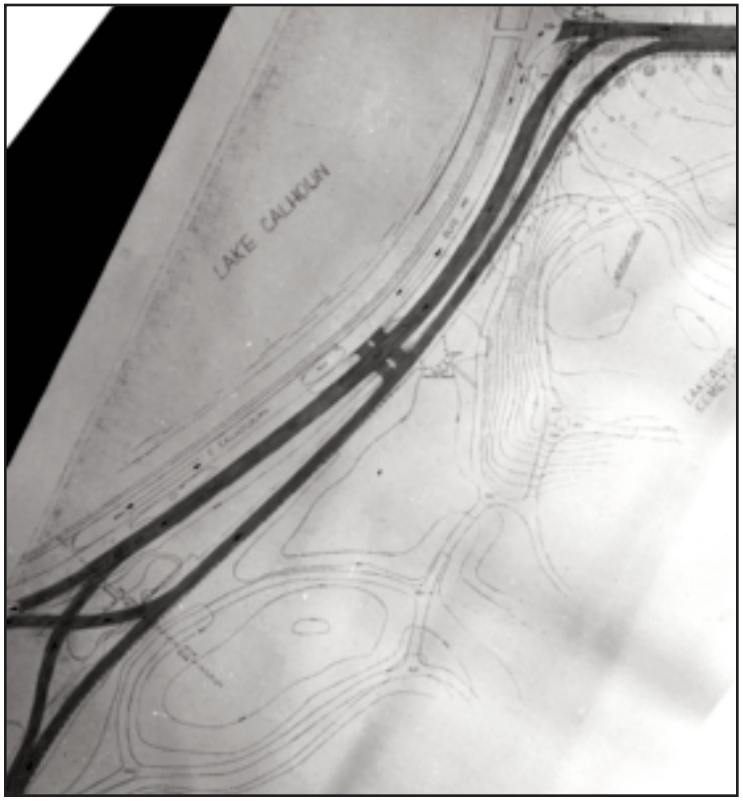
Some members of the city council… want the question of that right of way pinned down "Hard and fast" by the time the conversion takes place.

Some feel it could be resurfaced to handle the bus traffic which would replace the streetcars—and thus prevent overloading streets that weren't cut out for heavy duty.

Others feel that the possibilities are even wider and that with a moderate outlay of money, it could be rebuilt into a first-class expressway which would drain off a lot of the heavy traffic originating in the city's southwestern section.

As a result, the city council has ordered the city engineer, the city attorney and the planning commission to make a thorough investigation of this situation.





These maps were published in the Minneapolis Star, showing the proposed "expressway" on the streetcar right of way.

Lower left: The junction between the expressway and Richfield Road on the south-east side of Lake Calhoun.

TCRT crossing guard

-Art Abrahams

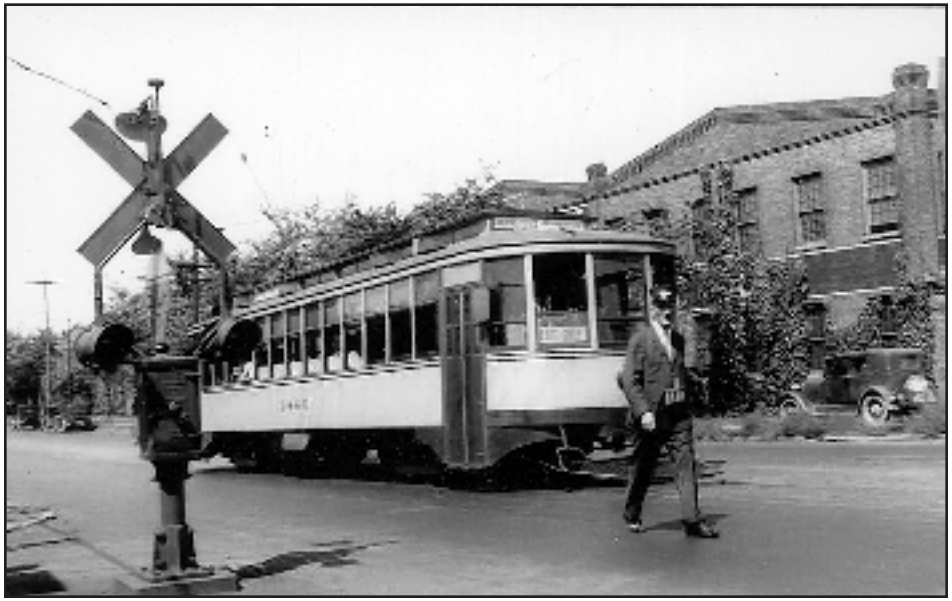
My first real job occurred in the summer of 1950. I had my driver's license and had just completed my 10th grade year at Washburn High School. I had an older neighbor friend whose Dad, L.G. (Big Jim) Barnes was very high in the operations area of Twin City Rapid Transit. He was an electrical engineer who had come from the East in the '20's to work on the power distribution needs of the company at the time.

I had asked him about any possible summer work that might be available. One early morning he had me come to his house and we drove in his '40 LaSalle coupe to the employment office at the Snelling and University shops in St. Paul.

I filled out a simple employment form, lying my age as 16, and he shepherded me into an office. There, I was offered a six week temporary job as a Crossing Guard on the Minneapolis Minnehaha/Fort Snelling line, where the streetcar on 27th Ave S. crossed the Milwaukee Road railroad tracks at 27th Street. State law stated there needed to be a crossing guard to walk out onto the railroad tracks to assure no train was coming, and to then wave



Above: Jan. 18, 1945: TCRT Supt. of Equipment L. G. Barnes with motorette Donna Turbes aboard the first PCC, car 299, diverted from a Pittsburgh order.
Below: This is the grade crossing on 27th Avenue S. that Art Abrahams guarded. No flagman is on duty, so the conductor is walking forward to do it.



a rolled up newspaper during daylight and a flashlight at night, to signal the streetcar to cross the tracks. The pay was $1.01/hour.

I of course was delighted and was given a badge to wear on a hat, which also gave me free ridership. So my first use was the streetcar ride home and that night at our dinner table, I proudly announced I had a short term job. I explained it to the family and then my Dad asked what my hours were. Four in the afternoon to midnight I proudly answered. That was received with something considerably less than enthusiasm.

The grade crossing had about an eight-foot square, two-story tower on the northwest corner. The lower level was shelter for the Twin City Rapid Transit Crossing Guard. An external stairway led up to the second level where the Railroad Crossing Guard manually operated the control console for the warning lights for the one crossing to the west at 26th Ave., 27th, and the two crossings to the east at 29th and 30th Ave. These were the twin flashing red lights with a warning bell and the railroad crossing crossbuck sign.

The job was wonderful. In short order I had enough money to purchase a '29 Model A Ford roadster with no top for $95 and now had the option of driving to work or riding the streetcar, depending on the weather.

The six weeks passed too soon and then it was job search time again.

From his second floor perch, the railroad guy could see all four of the intersections and manually switched the signals on and off. If a train was parked blocking an intersection, he knew to leave the signals off for the open crossings. The danger was if a train was stationery and blocking a motorist's (or motorman's) view either way beyond the open crossing, another train was frequently on the move coming from that direction and motorists would assume the signals were on because of the stationary train, and would cross the tracks and if lucky, only scared witless when they realized they just crossed in front of a moving train. The Transit Crossing Guard eliminated that possibility with the streetcar. However, most trains were on the move and would rarely block the streetcars for any significant time.

I was able to spend a little time up in the tower to learn what was going on and get the view up and down the tracks that let the railroad man determine what signals needed to be activated and in what sequence. The crossings now have automatic signals and gates for the one remaining track where I believe there were three or four at that time.

At midnight when my shift was over I was not relieved so I suspect the crossing was unguarded until possibly 8AM, but perhaps it was covered a bit earlier.

Other memories...on one occasion on a midnight ride home, a motorman let me operate the controller and perhaps hold the brake off. I know he never let me try to stop the car by myself or I probably would have been so intimidated, that 65 years later I would never had joined the museum to operate.

Another occasion...I remember on the midnight ride home, a section of paving between the tracks that was under construction and had some barricades keeping automobile traffic away. It was Lake Street at Cedar Ave. I believe. Well there was a car stuck in between the tracks and the police and a tow truck were at work to clear the tracks. The Motorman described it as a

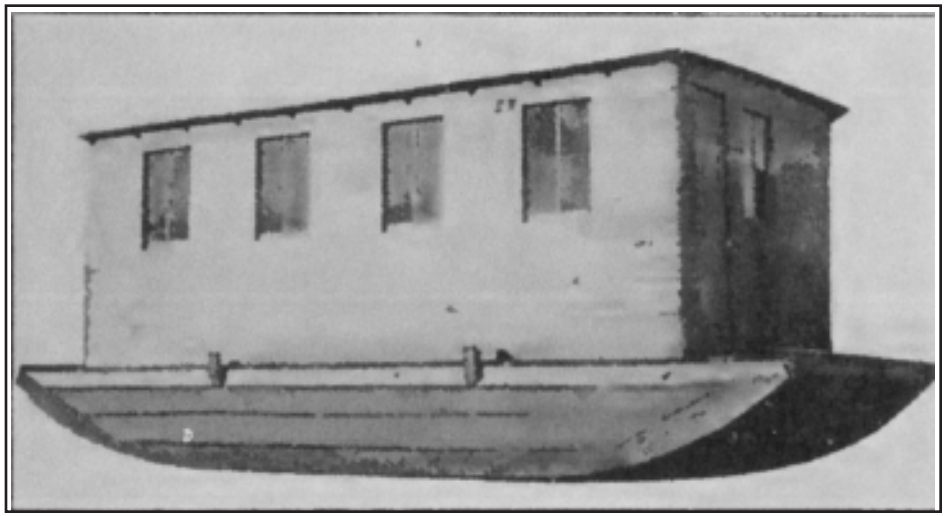
common "drunk trap" occurrence.

One last memory...Big Jim Barnes had a call out one evening as a streetcar backing into a wye had managed to fail to brake and had jumped the steel stop imbedded at the end of the wye and I believe had most if not all of the rear truck beyond the stop. This occurred in North Minneapolis somewhere. His son Joe and I got to ride along and view the mishap. Big Jim had some choice words at the scene, many of which I had not heard before.

The Amphibian of Duluth and Superior

From 1890 to 1893, before the opening of the Interstate Bridge in 1897, streetcar passengers who wanted to cross the harbor between Duluth and Superior took a ferry ride in the summer and walked across the ice in the winter. At the start and end of winter when the ice was forming or melting, the only alternative was to buy a train ticket on the Northern Pacific, which had the only bridge.

For the winter of 1893-94, the Duluth Street Railway and the Superior Rapid Transit Company decided to try something different, a cable powered sled across the ice between Rice's Point in Duluth and Connors Point in Superior. It ran for only the one winter. The next three years saw a trestle constructed across the ice.



In Russ Olson's research papers, now located in the Russell L. Olson Library at the Isaacs Carbarn, is a copy of a 1894 article from the Street Railway Journal. It tells the story of the cable sled. Here is an edited version of the original text with the accompanying illustrations.

The REVIEW has in its day illustrated a number of unique forms of transit, some practical and some only curiosities. To the practical category, however, belongs the idea brought out in the story of the Duluth-Superior ferry barge last winter, and which was the joint idea of that competent and progressive street railway man, H. M. Sloan, superintendent of the Superior Rapid Transit Company, Superior, Wis., and A. C. Majo, a bright marine designer.

Mr. Majo says, in relation to the work: "While engaged in the ferry service between Connor's Point, Superior, and Rice's Point, Duluth, it occurred to me that the service could be continued throughout the winter when the ice had formed and navigation was impossible."

Briefly, the idea was to provide a scow with a cabin and a pair of runners, using a cable as a motive power. This plan was accepted by the Duluth and Superior street railway managements and the construction of the scow begun. The plan was enlarged to admit of the use of the vessel in water during the times of bad ice in early spring, as well as on the hard surface in the winter time. It was regarded as possible, however, that its use as a sailing vessel would be limited, as judicious sprinkling of the roadway would render the ice thick and smooth enough to keep up the weight a little time after the surrounding ice had yielded up part of its strength to springtime's approach. After this date of course, regular ferry business between the cities would be resumed.

The scow is 10 feet wide by 26 feet long by 34 inches deep. Six truss gunwales of 4 by 6-inch pine add strength; it is planked with 2-inch pine, with deck and all securely caulked and sheeted with iron. The cabin extends the whole width of the vessel, leaving three feet at each end for a platform. The runners are two in number and made of 4 by 6-inch oak, steel shod.

The distance between the two landing points is 1,200 feet, and to propel this amphibian a cable plant was improvised. The power plant was situated on the Superior side of the channel and consisted of two 20-horse-power motors geared to two 3-foot drums, or strictly speaking, to one drum, for the second mentioned served as the idler and also as a tension carriage, being set in a sliding bed, from the end of which was attached a chain which ran over pulleys to a weighted box. A sheave was set on the dock at the Duluth end for the terminal sheave. The cable used is an inch steel rope with the necessary carrying and guiding pulleys. This was all the propelling machinery required. The rope was run over the deck of the scow, which is provided with two simple screw grips, one at each end of the boat, to control the motion.

After a few alterations the boat started regular trips the first of January. On March 15th, the ice gave way at a point 1000 feet from the Superior shore. This was the anxious moment, but the amphibian did all that was expected of her, by sliding from the ice into the water, crossing the



water and mounting the ice again, without a hitch. The break in the ice extended 150 feet and from that point to the shore the ice was three feet thick and solid to within 200 feet of the Duluth landing. It was thought afterwards advisable to cut a channel from one side to the other, but it was soon found that the floating ice was a graver danger than the jump from ice to water. Then, too, the passengers had become used to these leaps and did not consider them objectionable. In a short time the boat broke through again on the Duluth side, so that the ferry was in and out of the water twice each half trip. On account of the heavy float ice the ferry had to be pulled off a few days before the regular boats began running. The last winter was an exceptionally open one, and Mr. Majo is of the opinion that ordinary winters will find the amphibian a great convenience to the inhabitants of the two cities. Our sketch of the cable arrangement shows its simplicity and we think that the Superior and Duluth populace may be well proud of two such enterprising and ingenious citizens as Superintendent¬tendent Sloan and Engineer Majo have proven themselves.

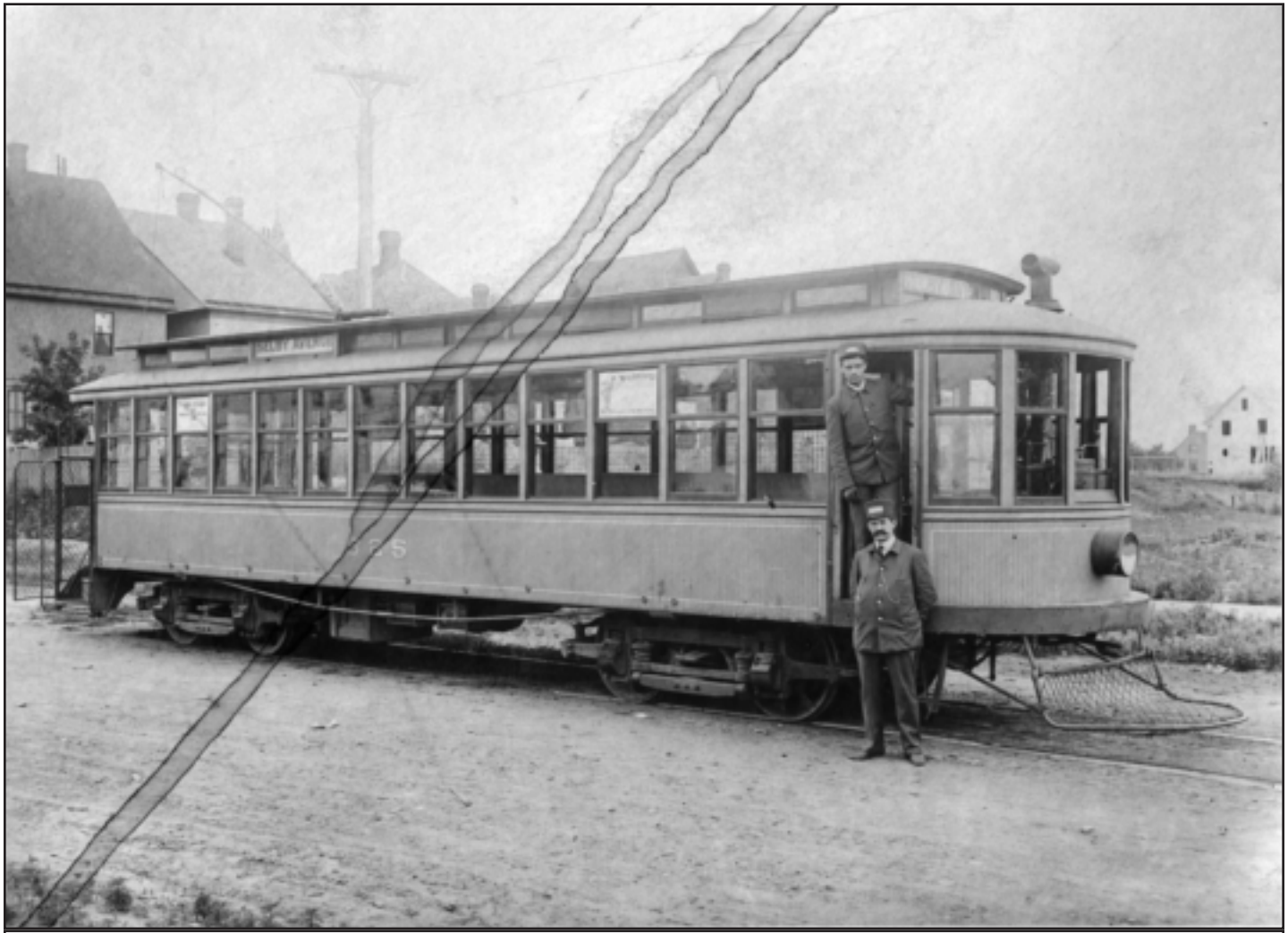


An ad for Duluth Street Railway stock, not a good investment by the way.

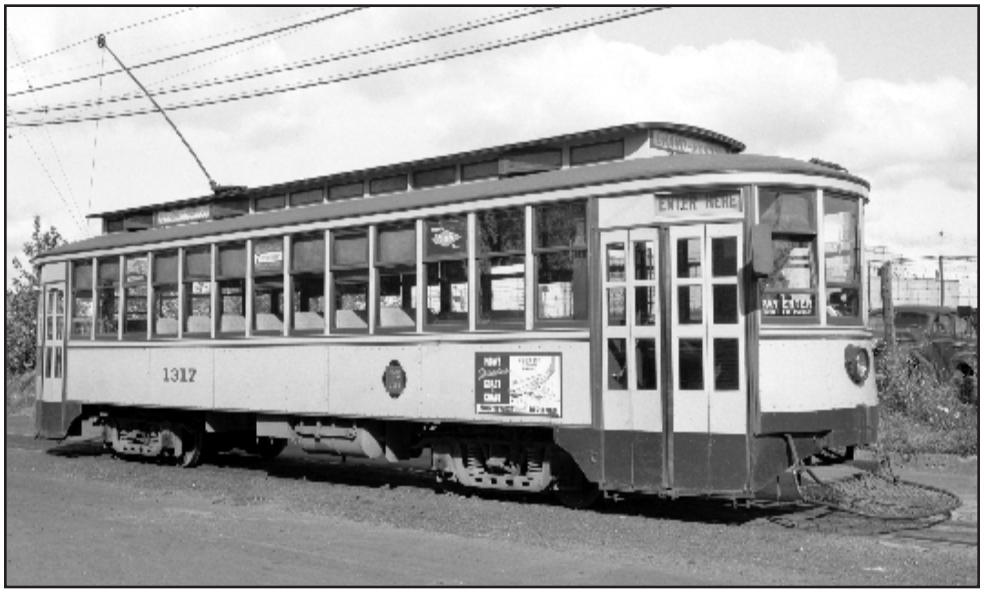
Exterior ad signs

Exterior advertising on streetcars goes way back. They were placed in the upper window sashes and first appear in photos about 1904.

The first outside ad frames other than upper window sashes were put on about June 1946, a single one on the right side behind the entrance door. On June 13, 1949, the small frames were replaced with large frames in the same place on all cars. The Green administration, which engineered the hostile takeover of the company in November 1949, proceeded to slash expenses and simultaneously increase revenue in every way except attracting more passengers. In February 1950 the second and third ad frames were added. September 1950 ad frames placed on front ends of cars, and about the same time, frames were added on pole (left) side toward the rear, and on the front and rear dashes, for a total of six big ad frames on outside of car. The first beer ads went on outside of cars in July 1950 and the first whiskey ad appeared in September 1950.



This photo, taken about 1903-04, shows what seems to be the earliest use of the upper sash ad signs that continued until the end of service. This is the Merriam Park end of the Selby Avenue line at Prior and University, before the extension across Lake Street.







Above left: In addition to the traditional upper sash ads, the late 1940s saw a single frame behind the front entrance door. Car 137 is laying over at the 27th Avenue NE and Washington Street, the end of the Monroe line.

Above: In 1950 the rear right side frame was added, then left side, front and rear frames. At the same time the 5-year overhaul program was discontinued and regular maintenance was cut back. The cars' appearance began to degrade.

Left: Ed Nelson photographed this Como-Harriet car on the Irving-James alley trackage 32nd Street just before the end of service in 1954.


Shoppers Attention....
Early CHRISTMAS shopping will eliminate last minute worries and permit of happier selections. In never ending regularity, Street Cars pass within a short distance of your home and shopping centers giving safe, comfortable and speedy transportation.
for additional convenience it is suggested that shoppers use the cars between the hours of nine and four
SHOP EARLY
WRAP SECURELY
MAIL EARLY
" use the street cars and tell us how to make them more attractive to you "
NO PARKING DELAYS •• NO TRAFFIC HAZARDS
TWIN CITY LINES
THE TRADE MARK OF A FRIEND


SPEED!
Dependable transportation in all sorts of weather . .
to insure unhurried, comfortable shopping plan to use the Street Cars between nine and four.
GIFTS
CHRISTMAS
STORE
JEWELRY
Shopping Advantage....
Conveniently arranged Street Car lines with frequent, speedy service make all stores easily accessible for your Christmas Shopping Tours Over ninety percent of all the people live within one-quarter of a mile of a Street Car line.
SHOP EARLY
WRAP SECURELY
MAIL EARLY
" use the street cars and tell us how to make them more attractive to you "
NO PARKING DELAYS •• NO TRAFFIC HAZARDS
TWIN CITY LINES
THE TRADE MARK OF A FRIEND

Bismarck's Capitol Car Line

We may be the Minnesota Streetcar Museum, but did you know that we do North Dakota as well? ND had five streetcar lines and three of them (Grand Forks, Fargo and Wahpeton) crossed the state line into Minnesota, so we had to cover those. The other two (Valley City and Bismarck) employed former Minnesota rolling stock. Since there's no one else doing it, we figured we'd be responsible for their history as well.

The North Dakota state capitol building is located a mile north of downtown Bismarck and travel between them was inconvenient, so the legislature approved the money to build a streetcar line to connect them. It was state owned and was listed in Moody's Manual as the State of North Dakota Electric Railway.

It started at the Soo Line depot at Main Street and 9th Street, and traveled west on Main to 4th Street, where the Northern Pacific depot was located. It turned north and followed 4th Street to the capitol grounds. There it left the street behind and entered private right of way. It's unclear how close it got to the capitol building itself.

There were no passing sidings and only a single car. Number 1 was built in 1903 by American Car Company. It was replaced in 1921 by former Grand Forks Street Railway single trucker #102.

According to Russ Olson's research, the state considered closing the line in 1917. However, Mickey O'Connor the manager-motorman had many friends in the legislature and persuaded them to keep it running. That may have been when it was shortened to 5th Street on the downtown end. Even though it was unprofitable, it lasted until February 28, 1931.

The body of car 102 became a lunch wagon across the river in Mandan. Amazingly it was saved and converted back into sort of an operating streetcar. It now has a gasoline engine, rides on a Taylor power truck and operates on the 5-mile Fort Lincoln Trolley in Mandan.

Car #1 on Main Street between 4th and 5th Streets (below) opposite the Northern Pacific depot, and (right) at the simple stop next to the state capitol building.







Above: Ex-Grand Forks #102 on the last day of service in 1931. Presumably one of these gentlemen is Mickey O'Connor, the line's only motorman. North Dakota State Archives collection.
Below: Another view of Main Street between 4th and 5th Streets. North Dakota State Archives collection.
Right: This postcard is dated 1920 and shows the track ending on Main at 5th Street.







This is just a great Duluth winter scene on Superior Street overlooking the lake at 9th Avenue E. about 1915. The streetcar is blurred, but does it really matter?

MINNESOTA STREETCAR MUSEUM

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August 2021

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